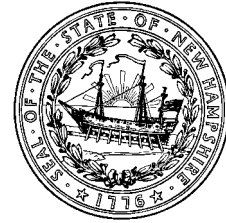


NH Department of Health and Human Services
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PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DHHS Continues Flood Response Efforts

Concord, NH – The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) continues to provide help to the flooded areas of Cheshire and Sullivan Counties. DHHS has done an assessment of healthcare and human services providers and there are currently no requests for assistance from hospitals, nursing homes, childcare providers, foster care, assisted living facilities, mental health or development disability providers. The only facility displaced by the flood was Phoenix House, a residential alcohol and drug rehabilitation provider in Keene, whose residents have been temporarily relocated to the Phoenix House facility in Dublin.

DHHS has sent public health nurses and other medical personnel to heighten surveillance activities to identify any possible disease outbreak. The Division of Public Services has also sent all of the State's food inspectors to the area to assess the over 300 food establishments (restaurants and grocery stores) in the impacted areas. These inspectors are working with local authorities to re-open these facilities as quickly as possible, while ensuring that all potentially contaminated foods are embargoed and destroyed and making certain that all food preparation areas are safe. Anyone with questions regarding food protection can call 271-4589 or email the Food Protection Section at foodprotection@dhhs.state.nh.us.

The Department's district offices in Keene and Claremont continue to be open and fully staffed to offer services for those displaced from the flooding, either directly or by referral, so individuals can find access to food, shelter and other services. The Division of Family Assistance has temporarily located a caseworker in both the Alstead Fire Department and the Keene Recreation Center. The Keene District Office can be reached at 357-3510 or (800) 624-9700. The Claremont District Office can be reached at 542-9544 or (800) 982-1001.

"We will continue to do as much as we can so long as the situation in the western part of the state requires our assistance," said DHHS Commissioner John Stephen. "Our first goal is to ensure the public health so we urge the public to follow some basic measures when dealing with flooding. Remember that the danger to public health does not disappear with the floodwater."

DHHS asks the public to:

- Avoid floodwater and flooded areas, as floodwater should be considered contaminated. Wear protection if you must travel through water that is part of a flood. Disinfect any items that come in contact with floodwater. Use ¼ cup of bleach per gallon of water as a disinfectant

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- If you use well water and your well has been flooded, make sure the well is tested and disinfected before using water to wash dishes, brush your teeth, wash and prepare food, wash your hands, make ice, or make baby formula
- Remember that moisture accelerates mold growth, which can cause disease and allergic reactions. Remove standing water and wet items from indoors as soon as possible

If flooding occurs in your area, listen to public announcements about the safety of the municipal water supply. Questions about testing or disinfecting water should be directed to your local health department or to the Division of Public Health Services at 603-271-4496. For more information, visit the NH Department of Health and Human Services at www.dhhs.nh.gov or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov.

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